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SEVERAL PROBLEMS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KAMCHATKA FISH INDUSTRY

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S. Mikhaylov, Sr Sci Assoc,  
Inst of Oceanography,  
Acad Sci USSR,  
Stalin Prize Winner

Kamchatka, the most distant oblast of the Soviet Union, is rightfully considered the "fish shop" of the country. The waters of Kamchatka are rich with salmon -- humpback, dog, king, silver, red, and European char. All types of salmon known in the world ocean are encountered here. The Kamchatka school of salmon is the largest in the world. Kamchatka supplies 60 percent of the total USSR salmon catch. The waters of Kamchatka are even richer in sea fish such as herring, flatfish, cod, and others.

Kamchatka is the most promising region of the Far Eastern fish industry. Unfortunately the present fish and sea-animal catch is considerably below what the natural wealth and technical fishing resources of the area would allow.

In the 1953 fishing season, utilization of stationary salmon seines on Kamchatka was artificially decreased by almost 20 percent. This was done deliberately, as the capacity of the coastal fish-processing base did not provide for receiving and processing of any additional catch. Even worse than this, it was found that coastal enterprises were not even able to process the catch from exposed seines.

In the Bay of Korfa, which was visited by the author in summer 1953, fish during 4 days of the fishing season were not removed or, as they say in Kamchatka, were not "poured out" of the nets because of a lack of salt and salting vats. A storm arose and threw not less than 20,000 metric quintals of salmon out of the nets.

At the Ust'-Bol'sheretsk Fish Combine, a limit was introduced for receiving fish from fishermen in the amount of 500 metric quintals per 24 hours, which constituted an insignificant part of the salmon catch. Consequently, at the very height of the fishing season, the fishermen were forced to cover the traps of the seines and not allow fish to come into the seines. This meant that the fishermen were inactive a great deal of the time only because the coast was not receiving fish.

These facts are not unusual. They have taken place in all regions of Kamchatka. Were there no delay in receiving fish, the salmon catch would be increased by 200,000-250,000 metric quintals.

The stationary seine is commonly used for catching salmon in Kamchatka and also in other regions of the Far East. It was designed for catching salmon when they approach the coastal zone and rivers of the coast. During some particularly good days, up to 60,000-70,000 metric quintals of salmon have been caught in Kamchatka, which is more than the total amount usually caught during 4 such months as February, March, October, and December.

It is necessary to develop active salmon fishing in regions of the Sea of Okhotsk, and in the Kuril Straits and the Pacific Ocean waters adjacent to them. The organization of active salmon fishing will make it possible to lengthen the fishing season by 45-60 days and thereby assure coastal processing enterprises a more regular supply of fish.

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During recent years, a large trawler fleet capable of year-round operation in open-sea regions has been built up in Kamchatka.

The strength of the Kamchatka trawler fleet is increasing every year. However, utilization of the trawler fleet has been most unsatisfactory. In the past the large steam trawlers have stayed in port during two thirds of the year and have operated at sea during the other third. The absence of a trawler port in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy and of trawler bases on the coast has caused the trawlers to lose a great deal of fishing time in delivering the fish already caught.

In January 1954 the situation was no better with regard to expeditionary fishing of herring in the northern region of the Sea of Okhotsk. Well-organized operation of the catching and transport and receiving fleet is a steadfast rule of sea expeditionary fishing. However, this rule has been broken. The Chapayev Receiving and Supply Base has arrived in the expedition region with a delay of more than a month. While waiting for it, the trawlers could not conduct normal fishing operations for herring.

In connection with the resolution of the Council of Ministers and the Central Committee of the CPSU "Concerning the Expansion of Food Products Production and Improvement of Their Quality," the Ministry of Food Products Industry USSR worked out a number of measures for increasing the fish catch in all basins, including Kamchatka. But the ministry's measures ignored the problem of a trawler port.

Because of long unproductive work stoppages, excessive losses of time in delivering fish, and other shortcomings in the operation of the Kamchatka trawler fleet, the fish catch on a trawler does not exceed 8,000-10,000 metric quintals annually. This obviously is a very low catch, taking into consideration that each average trawler could and should catch at least 15,000 metric quintals annually, while a large trawler should catch 30,000 metric quintals of fish annually.

Along with the operational improvement of the trawler fleet, it is necessary to perfect fishing equipment, particularly the design of the trawl. The trawl used for catching flatfish is extremely inadequate. It in no way conforms to the capacity of the trawler. This is evident from the fact that a boat of 60-80 horsepower, with an ordinary seine, fishes more than twice the area in 24 hours as compared to the average trawler of 300 horsepower equipped with a 25-meter trawl. The trawl for catching cod is even worse.

But the most serious shortcoming in the operation of the Kamchatka fish industry is the irrational attitude toward utilization of the fish catch.

First of all, it is quite impossible to agree with the fact that in Kamchatka approximately 20 percent of the total yearly salmon catch is used for dog food in the production of the so-called "Yukoly." Unquestionably, dogs play a great part in the economy of the peninsula: transport of people and freight is accomplished with their aid. At the same time, it is hard to understand that no one on Kamchatka concerns himself with the work of preparing dog food from other types of raw materials, such as sea-animal meat, freshwater fish, etc.

It is well known that halibut is a very valuable flatfish. Nevertheless, Kamchatka fishermen use small halibut as bait in fishing for cod.

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Even the bulk of the fish catch which goes to the fish combines is not properly utilized. Less than 25 percent of the total Kamchatka fish catch is processed into canned goods and 10 percent is processed into slightly-salted, moderately-salted, and frozen fish products. Approximately two thirds of Kamchatka fish go into crude salting, producing low-quality, unprofitable products.

It is necessary to completely reorganize the assortment of finished fish products. The bulk of the salmon catch must go into the preparation of slightly-salted, moderately-salted, and frozen fish products as well as canned goods.

The reorganization of assortment of finished fish products assumes a corresponding development of the coastal economy, first of all, an increase in the network of refrigeration plants and canneries.

The majority of Kamchatka canneries operate 25-35 days a year and during the remaining time stay idle because of lack of salmon. It is well known to leaders of the fish industry that it is possible to lengthen the season of operation of canneries only by developing the production of canned snacks or hors d'oeuvres of flatfish, herring, and other sea fish. However, even the new canneries are being constructed in the old way, that is, designed for only summer operation.

In considering ways to develop the Kamchatka fish industry, it is impossible to forget reproduction of raw-material resources. In January 1954 conditions for salmon reproduction on Kamchatka were growing decidedly worse in many river basins. Mouths of spawning rivers were choked with sand and pebbles, and river beds were clogged with submerged logs and bark. The cutting of forests and undergrowth along the river banks was causing many tributaries and springs to shoal. Consequently, the spawning areas were reduced and salmon were forced to deposit roe at random. The roe were either carried away by the current or were exposed to mass destruction in development.

It is time to work out and follow through with a system of measures to prevent further deterioration of facilities for salmon reproduction.

The development of the Kamchatka fish industry places a great task before piscatology. There has still not been studied the daily and seasonal vertical movements of cod. Consequently, up to January 1954, Kamchatka had had no trawl for catching cod. Like its distant relative, the sardine of Primor'ye, the Zhupanovskaya herring, which occupies first place among herring of the world for its high nutritional and taste qualities, has enigmatically disappeared from Kamchatka waters. The navaga, moyva, and other fish have stopped approaching the coastal zone of Kamchatka.

Science must give answers to all these problems. Kamchatka has been called upon to play an important role in creating an abundance of fish in the country. The Academy of Sciences USSR must strengthen its aid to Kamchatka.

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